

# UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL



University High School\_Parkville\_KJ\_9/7/08



University High\_Parkville\_front\_KJ\_9/7/08



University High\_parkville\_rear\_elevation\_Kj\_9/7/08



University High\_Parkville\_corridor\_KJ\_9/7/08



University High\_foyer\_KJ\_9/7/08



H2183 Uni high

## Location

77 STORY STREET PARKVILLE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2183

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO978

## VHR Registration

December 11, 2008

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

*What is significant?*

University High School was first established in 1910 in a former primary school building in Carlton as a coeducational practising school for the training of secondary school teachers, as well as for experimentation in methods of teaching and curricula for secondary schools. State secondary schools were only introduced in Victoria in 1905, and their number and the need for suitably qualified teachers increased rapidly. Secondary teachers were required to study for a Diploma of Education at the Teachers Training College associated with the University of Melbourne, as part of which they were required to do practice teaching lessons and also observe demonstration lessons. This placed a great strain on the few approved practising schools and led to the establishment of the school in 1910. However the old building in Carlton was always inadequate, and in 1924 land was set aside for a new school building on the former livestock market site in Parkville. Despite the economic depression the construction was supported because of the need to relieve unemployment, but the money allocated for the new building was reduced from an initial £60,000 to only £40,000. It was built in 1929 for £39,398 by J Pinnock to a design by the Public Works Department architect E Evan Smith, and opened in May 1930 with about 680 pupils accommodated in the fourteen classrooms. The school already enjoyed a reputation for academic success and for leadership in secondary teaching. From 1942-7 the school oval was occupied by a United States Army camp. From the 1960s a number of additional buildings have been constructed on the site.

The 1929 building at University High School is a three storey symmetrical Inter-War Stripped Classical style brick building with a hipped slate roof. The building is axially aligned with Benjamin Street to the north. On the north entrance front and on the side elevations the ground floor is rendered to form a rusticated base, and in the centre is rendered projecting pedimented section with a balustraded balcony over the arched entrance. Brick pilasters divide the brick walls on each side into four main bays, each containing three tall triple sash multi-paned timber-framed windows. The south side of the building is in a simpler style, without the rendering of the ground floor. The front entrance leads into a handsome foyer with a parquet floor and panelled walls. From the foyer corridors on either side lead to the classrooms, including some of larger than normal size used for giving demonstration lessons to trainee teachers. The external and internal window arrangement provides considerable natural light to

classrooms and the public spaces Stairways at the ends of the building once provided the only access to the upper floors, but a brick stair tower has been added on the centre of the south side. The interior, particularly the foyer and corridors, are highly intact.

How is it significant?

University High School is of architectural and historical significance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

University High School is historically significant for its association with the history of education in Victoria, in particular the important role it has played in the education of secondary teachers. It was established as the principal secondary practising school for the training of secondary teachers and since its establishment in 1910 has been a leader in curriculum and teaching methods. Its simple design reflects the straitened economic circumstances of the 1920s depression.

University High School is architecturally significant as a fine example of a high school building in the Inter-War Stripped Classical style. It exemplifies E Evan Smith's design approach during his time as Chief Architect of the Public Works Department, which expressed contemporary ideas of civic beauty through the use of classical styles, an emphasis on axiality and respect for the surroundings. In terminating an urban vista it provides a demonstration of the then current "city beautiful" ideals of town planning.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note:

The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates	1929,
Architect/Designer	Smith, Edwin Evan,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	5900
Property Number	

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## History

### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

[taken largely from Alice Hoy, *A City Built to Music. The History of University High School, Melbourne 1910 to 1960*, Melbourne 1961.]

#### Education

The 1872 *Education Act* had stipulated free, secular and compulsory public education only at the primary level, and during the nineteenth century there were no state secondary schools in Victoria, only fee-paying colleges established by churches and private individuals.

The leaders of industry and educationists were urging the importance of secondary and technical education for the prosperity and strength of the state, and were supporting the establishment of post-primary and continuation schools. In 1899 a Royal Commission was appointed under the Hon Theodore Fink to make recommendations on a system of technical education, but this was extended further to also include primary and secondary education, the teaching profession and aspects of university training. A Teachers Training College had opened next to the university in 1890, but had closed temporarily in 1893. One outcome of the Fink Commission was that in 1901 a Director of Education, Frank Tate, was appointed, who had been made Principal of the Training College when it reopened in 1900. Another recommendation of the Fink Commission led to the introduction in 1902 of a Diploma of Education course for the training of secondary teachers at the University of Melbourne.

In 1905 the first state secondary school in Victoria, the Melbourne Continuation School, was established at the old Model School in Spring Street. As it had done before, this continued to provide teacher training, but some students, even those from poor backgrounds, could also pursue courses leading to University entrance. The *Registration of Teachers and Schools Act* of 1905 provided that all schools and teachers in Victoria should be registered, and registration would require a Diploma of Education. The diploma course would include a number of university subjects as well as a practical component, with a requirement to teach at least sixty hours in each year under the supervision of a lecturer or approved class teacher, and attend observation lessons given by the latter. A great strain was thereby placed on the few approved practising schools, and it became apparent that a special secondary school was required as a centre for teaching practice.

State secondary (continuation) schools were established in 1907 in Ballarat, Bendigo, Warrnambool and Sale. The Education Act of 1910 gave the government authority to establish district high schools (as well as higher elementary schools, continuation schools, preparatory trade classes, trade schools and technical schools). As well as the five continuation schools already established, secondary schools opened in 1909 in Shepparton and Wangaratta, in 1910 in Melbourne (University High), Castlemaine and Geelong, in 1911 in Coburg, Colac, Mansfield and Warragul, and in 1912 eight secondary schools opened (the highest number established in any one year until 1954): at Maryborough, Horsham, Kyneton, Leongatha, Stawell, Bairnsdale, Echuca and Mildura. (A Max Badcock, 'The Secondary Division', in *Vision and Realisation*, pp 436-462.)

## Architecture and town planning

In the 1920s there was an increasing awareness of the need to create an attractive urban environment in Melbourne, rather than merely hope for its development. This was manifested through the formation of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission in 1922, and culminated in the completion of the Plan for General Development, Melbourne, published in 1929.

A concern with axiality and vistas emerged to dominate debates about the location of Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance, which was being planned during this period. The application of Beaux Arts concepts to city planning at this time has been attributed to the publicity given to the Versailles Peace Treaty in 1919, and the coverage given to Versailles itself in a special issue of the *Architectural Review* in March 1920. It was also during this period that Walter Burley Griffin's design for Canberra, with its focus on principles of axiality and vista, was being implemented.

Melbourne's concern with the ideals of good taste and beauty was taken up by the Herald and Weekly Times Ltd, which ran a competition in 1930 for 'the City's Most Beautiful Building'. There was strong support from the public and the architectural profession for the idea that the facades of buildings should relate far more to the street. Professor Leslie Wilkinson, first Professor of Architecture at the University of Sydney, wrote on 'The Control of Architecture in Public Streets' in *Architecture* in 1929. He proposed that 'most buildings are visible from the public streets which belong to the community', and that therefore 'the interests of the community as a whole as regards external appearance should not be sacrificed to the wishes of the owners of individual buildings'.

In 1922 an article by J H Harvey in *Building* commented that Desbrowe-Anne's Chapel Street Bridge was designed in the classical idiom 'applicable to public structures in Melbourne, which is noted for its civic pride, and in this respect is analogous to Rome of ancient days'. The continuity of classicism within architecture is illustrated by a large number of city buildings, and reflects the sobriety and traditionalism of the period after the Great War. The best known exemplars of this mode are E Evan Smith's Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy and the Shrine of Remembrance.

E Evan Smith was born in Scotland in 1870 and migrated to Australia in 1889. He had been articled to an architect in Scotland and on arrival in Australia was first employed as a draftsman in the Department of Public Works in Queensland then moved to the Commonwealth Department of Works. He was Chief Architect in the Public Works department of Victoria from 1922 to 1929, and a Fellow of the RIBA

Smith was part of a revival of the classical tradition in architecture which characterised the 'City Beautiful' period in 1900-29, when the first moves were made towards comprehensive town planning in Melbourne. The Royal Victorian Institute of Architects introduced awards for buildings which considered their contribution to the street as a whole and to civic beauty and architecture. Smith's classical design for the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy (1926, VHR H1646) won the RVIA Street Architecture Medal in 1930, and the former Police Barracks in St Kilda Road (1926, VHR H1541), now part of the Victoria College of the Arts is another notable example of his classical designs.

## HISTORY OF PLACE

[taken from Alice Hoy, *A City Built to Music. The History of University High School, Melbourne 1910 to 1960*, Melbourne 1961, and from the University High School website, <http://www.unihigh.vic.edu.au/history.htm>]

In 1908 a deputation approached the Minister for Education to urge upon him the necessity of establishing a practising school for the training of secondary teachers, but the Director considered then that the expense of a new building was not justified. It was decided to use State School no 1073 in Lygon Street. It was closed in 1908 and extensive alterations carried out. Since the school was to be closely associated with the University it was felt that this relationship should be emphasised in its name. But there was then already a private school in Carlton

known as the University High School, so the alternative name of the University Practising School was agreed on.

The aims of the new school were the training of students for secondary teaching and experimentation in methods of teaching and curricula for secondary schools. Teachers were required to act as lecturers in the Diploma of Education course. The first principal was L J Wrigley, who also became Vice-Principal (Secondary) of the Training College.

The school opened in 1910. It was co-educational from the beginning, and opened with an enrolment of 82 pupils, 40 boys and 42 girls, all about 12 years old. They were chosen on the basis of a competitive examination and personal interviews, and were admitted without fees for a three year course leading to the Junior Public Examination. Pupil numbers increased to 112 in 1911, providing practice for 63 student teachers.

The older University High School closed in 1912, and the new school's name was changed to The University High School for Practice, but the last two names were never used.

At the first Junior Public Examinations in 1912, the school's pupils were extremely successful, with 93.5% passing compared to a state average of 48%. However it was clear that the school would need to expand rapidly to provide teaching practice for the Diploma students, whose numbers rose rapidly from 111 in 1909, to 154 in 1910, to 180 in 1912 and to 217 in 1915. By then the school's reputation for scholarship was already well-established and enrolment was highly competitive, but the accommodation even then was considered unsatisfactory.

The second Principal, Mr Matthew Sharman, was appointed in 1915. Under his leadership, from 1915 to 1941, the School grew immensely in stature, and acquired much of its continuing tradition. Sharman himself wrote the music for the School Song, and established the original system of Houses, named after members of the school community who gave their lives in the First World War.

Over the years a number of sites had been suggested for a new school, and in 1924 it was announced that the Government had set aside 5 acres at the former horse market site on the corner of Royal Parade and Story Street in Parkville for the new school. It belonged to the City Council, and by 1920 only the pig market was still being held there, the rest being used as a depot for Council stores, horses and vehicles.

By the late 1920s there was mounting evidence of a serious economic depression. The Trades Hall Council supported the building new schools only because of the need to relieve the growing unemployment. The new Melbourne High School was completed early in 1928 at a cost of ?100,000, and a new University High School was planned to cost ?60,000, subsequently reduced to ?40,000. In July 1928 the tender of J Pinnock for ?39,398 was accepted for a building designed by Edwin Evan Smith, Chief Architect of the Public Works Department. The building was completed in 1929 and was officially opened in May 1930 by the Minister for Education Mr Lemmon. Its fourteen classrooms, some very large to accommodate pupils as well as trainee teachers, were occupied by about 680 pupils. It already enjoyed a reputation for leadership in secondary teaching that extended beyond Victoria. Because construction took place during a time of severe economic depression, no additional facilities were provided and more than thirty years were to pass before the school had its own hall.

In 1942, the American Army set up a camp on the School oval (it was returned to the School in 1947), and in the same year 240 students from the Mac Robertson Girls' High School were accommodated in the school after their buildings were taken for military purposes. To make room for these girls, students of years 7 and 8 were moved from Story Street to Princes Hill, and for the next thirty years, the University High School was without junior classes.

The school has continued to develop in the post-war period. With the high level immigration to Australia in the post-war years the School developed an increasingly cosmopolitan character. In 1960, the 50th anniversary of the School's foundation, plans for building extensions, incorporating a hall, gymnasium, cafeteria and other facilities were drawn up, and a fund-raising organization established, and the additions were built in 1965. Another feature was the growth of the University High School Evening School. This organization, at first administered by the University High School, and subsequently by the Collingwood College of Technical and Further Education, provided secondary education for thousands of adult students. In 1982 the Stella Langford Music Wing was added at the west end of the 1929 building. Since 1985, an underground car park serving the adjacent hospital and the School has opened beneath the oval, and a Technology Studies building added at the east end of the 1929 building, and another building was added to the south-east in 2002. A major refurbishment of the existing buildings took place in 1995-6. In 2008 works are currently taking place to the front garden and

access to the 1929 building.

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

### *a. The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object*

University High School has important associations with the history of education in Victoria, in particular the important role it has played in the education of secondary teachers. It was established as the principal secondary practising school for the training of secondary teachers and since its establishment in 1910 has been a leader in curriculum and teaching methods. Its simple design reflects the straitened economic circumstances of the 1920s depression in Victoria.

### *b. The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness*

c. The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage

d. The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects

University High School is a fine example of a high school building in the Inter-War Stripped Classical style. It exemplifies E Evan Smith's design approach during his time as Chief Architect of the Public Works Department, which expressed contemporary ideas of civic beauty through the use of classical styles, an emphasis on axiality and respect for the surroundings.

e. The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features

f. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements

g. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations

h. Any other matter which the Council deems relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

## **Plaque Citation**

This Stripped Classical style high school, designed by E Evan Smith and built in 1929, has played an important role in the education of secondary teachers and in teaching method development in Victoria.

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All of the building shown as B1 on Diagram 2183 held by the Executive Director.

2. All of the land shown as L1 on Diagram 2183 held by the Executive Director being part of the land contained in Crown Allotment 4 Section 13A Parish of Jika Jika at Parkville permanently reserved for educational purposes.

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*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*